

THE BRAHMAVÂDIN.

“एकं सत् विभावहुधावदन्ति.”

“That which exists is One: sages call it variously.”—*Rigveda*, I, 164, 46.

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MITRA.

1. Mitra, speaking, impels people to labour: Mitra sustains the earth and the heaven. Mitra beholds men with unwinking eyes. Offer to Mitra the oblation which contains clarified butter.

2. O Aditya Mitra, may the mortal who offers you food in the sacrifice possess food in abundance. Protected by you, he is neither slain nor conquered. Sin does not reach him from near or from far.

3. Free from sickness, rejoicing in food, with knees bent on the broad surface of the earth, free to move everywhere, and following closely the work ordained by the Aditya, may we remain in Mitra's gracious favour.

4. This blessed adorable Mitra was born a king, possessed of strong strength, and maker of all. May we remain in the gracious favour of him who is worthy to be worshipped, yet, rest in his propitious loving-kindness.

5. The great Aditya, who is to be approached with worship and who impels men to action, is graciously kind to the singer of praise. To Mitra who is most worthy to be praised offer in fire this oblation which he loves.

6. The grace of the god Mitra who is the supporter of mankind is to be sought and obtained by all, is splendid and of glorious renown.

7. The famous Mitra who surpasses heaven in greatness surpasses the earth in (producing) abundance of food.

8. All the five races of men approach (by worship) Mitra who is ever strong to aid. He sustains all the gods,

9. To gods and to that man among men who (in worship) strews the sacred gifts, Mitra gives food which is fit for the performance of divinely ordained auspicious work.

Rigveda, III, 59.

Mitra means the *Friend*, and is a well-known Aditya.

Regarding the Adityas Roth has said—

"They are the inviolable, imperishable, eternal beings. Aditi, eternity or the eternal, is the element which sustains them and is sustained by them The eternal and inviolable element in which the Adityas dwell, and which forms their essence is the celestial light They are neither sun, nor moon, nor stars, nor dawn, but the eternal sustainers of this luminous life, which exists, as it were, behind all these phenomena."

Mitra is, however, identified by some with the Sun, and is pre-eminently a friendly deity presiding over Light and Life. He corresponds to the Mithra of the Persian *Zend-Avesta*, "the eventual introduction of whose worship into the West is matter of history."

Renan says in his *Hibbert Lectures* that "it was, above all, the Mithraic worship which in the second and third centuries attained an extraordinary prevalence;" and he continues, "I sometimes permit myself to say that if Christianity had not carried the day, Mithraicism would have become the religion of the world. It had its mysterious meetings: its chapels, which bore a strong resemblance to little churches. It forged a very lasting bond of brotherhood between its initiates: it had a Eucharist, a Supper so like the Christian mysteries, that good Justin Martyr, the Apologist, can find only one explanation of the apparent identity, namely, that Satan, in order to deceive the human race, determined to imitate the Christian ceremonies, and so stole them." It must be noted here that similarity of doctrines can be more easily accounted for than that of rituals.

Plutarch is often quoted to show the place of Mithra in Zoroastrianism which like the later Christianity believes in the existence of God and of the Devil opposed to God. "He (Zoroaster) called the one (*i. e.*, God) Oromazes, the other (*i. e.*, Devil) Aimanus, and declared that the former resembled light most of all sensible things, and the latter darkness and ignorance. He also said that Mithras was intermediate between them. This is the reason why the Persians call Mithras the mediator." Is it not generally believed by Christians that Christ mediates between man and God to deliver the former from the hands of the devil?

Further Emile Burnouf says in his *Science of Religions*, "The *Zend-Avesta* contains the whole Metaphysical doctrine of the Christians: the unity of God, the living God, the Spirit, the Word, the Mediator, the Son begotten by the Father, principle of life in the body and sanctification of the soul." He also points out many other similarities between Zoroastrianism and Christianity both in regard to doctrines and rituals.

"In this mild and wholly beneficent deity (*viz.*, Mitra) we recognize", says the author of the volume on Vedic India in the *Story of Nations Series*, "the Mithra of the Eranians, with whom the Avesta makes us so intimately acquainted—only he has paled somewhat and become more impersonal, although he has retained all the qualities which distinguished him before the separation of the two races (the Hindu and the Persian Aryas), especially that of the all-seeing and truth loving-god."

May not the Vedic Mitra with his beneficent universalism, as brought out even in the above hymn, be after all the original prototype of the Christian conception of the anointed Saviour? There must be indeed very much more of the divine inspiration of the Veda and the Vedanta in Christianity than Christians are as yet aware of. God, who is our Friend, will gradually let the whole truth shine upon us all.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA'S TEACHINGS.

1. You see many stars at night in the sky, but find them not when the sun rises: can you say that there are no stars in the heaven of day? So, O man! because you behold not God in the days of your ignorance, say not that there is no God.

2. The darkness of centuries is dispersed at once as soon as a light is brought into the room. The accumulated sins of innumerable births vanish before a single glance of God's gracious look.

3. In the play of hide and seek, if the player succeeds in touching the grand-dame (*Boori*) he is no longer liable to be made a thief of by the seeker. Similarly by once seeing God man is no longer bound down by the fetters of the world. Just as the person touching the *Boori* is free to go about wherever he chooses without being pursued and made a

thief of, so also in this world's play-ground there is no fear to him who has once touched the feet of God. He attains freedom from all worldly cares and anxieties and nothing can ever bind him again.

4. There is little chance of the ship running amiss, so long as its compass points towards the true North. So if the mind of man—the compass-needle of the ship of life—is turned always towards the *Parabrahman* without oscillation, it will steer clear of every danger.

5. When the *Malaya-breeze* blows, all trees with stamina in them are said to be converted into sandal trees; while the papua, the bamboo, the plantain and other staminaless trees remain unchanged. So, when the Divine Grace descends men having germs of piety and good capacity in them are changed at once into holy beings and are filled with Divinity; while worthless worldly men remain unchanged

The Brahmavadin

SATURDAY, 23RD NOVEMBER 1895.

THE PLACE OF BHAKTI IN THE VEDANTA.

Bhakti or devotion to God is of the heart and not of the intellect; it is an affection or a sentiment, and not a discriminating perception. When the whole conscious life of an individual is pervaded by the absorbing fulness of Divine existence; when he goes through life and discharges his appointed functions in the conviction that "the Intelligent whose body is spirit, whose form is light, who is omnipresent and invisible" is the one and only source of "all works, all desires, all odours and tastes"; when he is inebriated, as it were, with the presence of God in all that he feels, in all that he sees and in all that he does, then may he be called a *Bhakta*. The mind of the true devotee melts and loses itself in the ocean of Divine effulgence, as a drop of water in the lord of the waters. In the *Bhagāvatā* he is described as one "standing outside the world, as laughing and weeping, singing and weeping, and as dancing like a maniac." His madness is of the heart, and not of the understanding. His experiences he interprets as we do, and deals with the problems and affairs of life like ourselves. But he is not of the world even while in it; and his mind stands in relation to his deeds as the leaf of the lotus in relation to the drops of water on it. It is of such men that Śrī Krishna says that "they are in me and I am also in them:"

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।

ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥

"The same am I amid all beings; there is none hateful to me nor dear. They verily who worship Me with devotion, they are in Me, and I also in them".—*Bhagavadgītā*, IX, 29.

The devotion of a person is not however, as indicated above, hostile to his usual routine of life. It must be taken as comprehending the whole course of human duties and responsibilities. It appears to be, as the followers of Patanjali affirm, the promptest mode of attaining beatitude. But this consummation it secures only by leading him

on in the path of righteousness. It is not possible for the ordinary man entirely to abstain from action; for "helplessly is every one driven to action by the energies of nature." And action is superior to inaction; for "action is of the divine, and should therefore be performed continually." But in performing it, the true devotee to God performs it "without attachment." He is imbued so much with the Divine spirit, that he confidently approaches the great God with the free gift to Him of all that he may call his. The word *mine* is entirely blotted out of his vocabulary. And God, he is assured, will condescend to accept his deeds as the most agreeable offerings on His altar. For, is it not said in the *Gītā*, that "however men approach me, even so do I accept them, for the path men take from every side is mine." The devotee is described as "not doing anything even while doing actions," because he desires not the fruits thereof.

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्महवि ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥

"*Brahman* the receiver, *Brahman* the oblation, *Brahman* the fire, *Brahman* the sacrificer; unto *Brahman* verily shall he go who in his action meditates wholly upon *Brahman*."

—*Bhagavadgītā*, IV, 24

How is the mind to gain this spirit of true devotion to God? The senses of man are potent for distraction. The mind is yoked to unruly horses; but it is yet strong enough to control them and lead them aright. "He who has understanding and whose mind is always firmly held, his senses are under control."* He may move among the diverting objects of sense, without yielding to the temptation of desiring them for his own enjoyment. Wisdom enables us to renounce our desires of which the senses, *Manas* and *Buddhi* are the seat; nay, true wisdom consists in renunciation. By the renunciation of the fruits of action, the mind gains *peace*; and peace leads to devotion.

The Upanishads have declared knowledge to be the true path to Salvation. It is not in the power of every man to secure this knowledge. The strictest observance of the Vedic injunctions and a life of unswerving virtue may fail to secure the purification and enlightenment of the mind which leads to true knowledge. "The Self cannot be gained by the Veda, nor by under-

standing, nor by much learning," says the Mundaka Upanishad. And is it not hard upon man that the liberation from the bondage of life, and that the bliss of eternity, should be placed on such inaccessible heights? To reach this goal of life, the Brahmins of old sat before the sacred fire and sent up savoury oblations to please the eternal gods. But it was soon declared that their elaborate sacrifices were but the means to an end. Those sacrifices were only the occasions for a self-forgetful surrender of all that may be held dear by a person, and led but to the lower heavens of the gods, without destroying for eternity the bonds of life and its *Karma*. The same subordinate part was ascribed to a life of virtue. Virtue is indeed the necessity of human nature; without it no step can be taken towards the ultimate goal of humanity. But, however exalted its function, it is yet only ancillary to the attainment of true knowledge. Sacrifices and virtue are the means, and knowledge the end in relation to them. And Salvation can be reached only through knowledge.

Such was the proud position assigned to the intellectual abstraction of the universe into the Ultimate Basis of all existences. It is easy, or at least possible, to accomplish works, to study the Vedas and act up to their injunctions. But the ascent to the Unity of Existence beyond the multiplicity of perception is not at all easy of accomplishment to all. The weak imagination of man cannot rise to the magnitude of such a conception. It is in a manner the slave of the body; and to overstep the limits set to our vision by the body, to forget in our spiritual absorption the bonds of our corporeal frame is a feat difficult even of conception to the ordinary man. Hence was felt the need for an easier approach to the Supreme. And devotion is the haven offered to the desponding souls striving for the realisation of the Unknown, but floundering in the effort in a sea of doubts and difficulties.

Bhakti is referred to in the Upanishads, in connection with final liberation, not as competent to work out man's salvation by its own efficacy, but only as preparing the soil for the reception of the highest truth. In the Śvetāśvatara Upanishad, the closing sentence is as follows: "If these truths have been told to a high-minded man, who feels the highest devotion for God, and for his Guru, as for God, then they will shine forth,—then they will shine forth indeed." It is clear from this that devotion and faith was considered

to conduce to the proper fruition of the teachings of the Vedānta. If the disciple be *high-minded* and if he also feel the highest devotion to God and to the Guru, then it is promised that the truths will "shine forth" in him. But in the *Gītā*, a higher place is supposed by some to be taken by *Bhakti*. There are passages which may be taken to imply that the man of devotion can by this means alone reach the highest spiritual rewards. Śrī Krishna declares that in Him is centred the whole world, all sacrifices, all oblations and all human actions and thoughts:

अहंकृतुरहंयज्ञःस्वधाहमहमौषधम् ।

मन्त्रोहमहमेवाज्य महमग्निरहंहुतम् ॥

"I the oblation; I the sacrifice; I the ancestral offering; I the curing herb; I the hymn; I also the clarified butter; I the fire; I the burnt-offering."

—*Bhagavadgītā*, IX, 16.

It follows therefore that devotion to Him must be taken to comprehend the whole duty of man. But as already observed, *Bhakti*, however efficacious its power to lead to final beatitude, is not the annihilation of action and virtue, but only changes the central force of human impulses and makes the devotee feel that he is the instrument of a Divine wisdom which works through his intellectual and moral consciousness. It belongs to a later stage of thought in India to claim for *Bhakti* an exclusive right to approach the inmost temple of the Deity. In the religion of the *Purānas*, when individual places of worship and particular gods had their own warm advocates and partisans, sacrifices, virtue and knowledge which play so important a part in the streams of early thought, fall into the background, and devotion is set up as an unfailing panacea to all our spiritual ills. It is not our intention to enter here into a discussion of this phase of religious thought. But we shall refer to an offshoot of the philosophy of *Bhakti* foreshadowed in the *Gītā*. The Vedānta laid stress on knowledge, on the knowledge of truth, as the final step to salvation. But this knowledge of the Vedāntin has no kinship with what we understand by that term in ordinary parlance. It is knowledge not of the Relative, but of the Absolute; and knowledge derived not from sense-discrimination, but from *Yōga* and the grace of the *Guru*. It is only analogically that this inspiration of the disciple by the teacher is called knowledge. The Upanishads have declared

in unmistakable terms that the Absolute is unknowable; and yet affirm the possibility of knowing Him as the step preparatory to salvation. We are supposed to be capable of accomplishing what we have been told, time out of number, to be impossible to accomplish. The explanation is that in asserting the possibility of knowing the Absolute the assumption is made that a new path of gaining knowledge opens itself to the man who is "high-minded and feels the highest devotion to God" and to his Guru, a path different from the usual paths to knowledge and not accessible unless it be through the grace of the Guru and of God. The Upanishad says: "A man who is free from desires and free from grief, sees the majesty of the Self by the *grace* of the creator."* This idea that it is through the *grace* of the creator that a man can see "the majesty, the Lord, the passionless"† seems to be common to the Vedāntins. And when it is said in the *Gītā* that "Even performing all actions continually, taking refuge in me, by my *grace* he obtaineth the eternal indestructible Abode,"‡ it should not be supposed that this *grace* of God will be vouchsafed to one, not already purified by virtuous actions. The devotee is directed to rest his *Manas* on God,§ to sacrifice to Him, to prostrate himself before Him; and then he shall go even unto Him. But "This is not to be at any time given out to any one who is without religious austerities, nor to one who is not devoted, &c." It is consequently evident that the teachings of the *Gītā* are not to any degree subversive of the teachings of the Upanishads. Both insist upon a life of virtuous practice; both promise knowledge of the ultimate truth as the reward; but in both there is added the condition that even virtue cannot lead us to this knowledge unless it be through the *grace* of God and of the Guru. Hence *Bhakti* or faithful devotion has the same function to perform in either view. Without it, the *grace* of God cannot be obtained; nor the *grace* of the Guru. And herein lies its efficacy.

To one imbued with the materialistic Agnosticism of the West, it may appear irrational to claim a place for faith and devotion in the development of the religious spirit. If the whole mind of man is but the product of the physical and chemical forces inherent in material particles, "then is morality but a bare catalogue of utilitarian precepts; beauty but the chance occasion of a passing pleasure; reason but the dim passage from one set of unthinking habits to another. All that gives dignity to life, all that gives value to effort, shrinks and fades under the pitiless glare of a creed like this"|| In this scheme of the universe, it will be difficult indeed to find a place for man's devotion and Divine grace.

But if we take a truer conception of the universe, a conception that is free from "the obscurities, the defects of proof and the incoherences" which beset the scientific materialism

of modern times, then shall we feel the necessity and the wisdom of assigning to devotion and grace their proper place and function.

It was soon discovered that it is no easy task to renounce the attractions of the world, to overcome the impulses of our nature, to act unmindful of the consequences of our action and to walk ever in the living presence of God. Mental concentration, the fixed convergence of all the forces of the mind upon the one eternal "Flood of Light", is often impossible in the face of the thwarting influences of the body. The discovery of the means for subduing these bodily impulses is to be found in what is generally called *Yoga*.

Western psychology teaches us that man has no direct power of controlling his mental life; we cannot call a mental state into existence by the mere force of the will. We may rummage for it in the established trains of association, mentally roam over the connected phenomena and try to circumvent the absent thought with the aid of its affinity to its fellows. But a direct grasp by the mind of the idea that it may desire to realise in consciousness and resuscitate in its unassociated individuality, is impossible. It is equally impossible to control our emotions by a direct effort of volition; to repress the rising feeling of anger we have to take a circuitous path; with the aid of the voluntary muscles, we have to suppress the rising frown, to tie down the refractory limbs that would start into immediate action against the object of our provocation, and to bite into the throbbing lips till the pain of the swelling blood counteracts in the mind the force of the dominant irritation.

Here we have an explanation of the practices taught by the *Yoga*. The *Yoga* is but a means to an end; and the all-absorbing devotion to God is that end. We gain a control over our body by its practice; and the mind is released from its thralldom to the flesh. It is not our purpose to discuss this subject here, beyond pointing out how it had its first origin in the effort of man to hold communion with God and become God-like. This control of the senses is *Yoga* in the lower sense. It has also a higher significance; and that is devotion, the enraptured union of the soul with God. One who "after he has done that work and rested again, and after he has brought together one essence with the other,"* he has appeared master in the world; "no one is like unto him; heart better,"...and "he is freed from all fetters."† restraining the sense, the power of fixation from attention is gained; and attention involves itself an investigation and absorption; and by this unite into the *Yogin* "beholds the Lord, the Person is a higher man, the Cause, then this sage, leaving genuine piety good and evil makes everything to be genuine piety. Highest Indestructible."‡

But all this is possible only if the soul speaks with security the grace of God. On the other hand, by us, the final consummation of the life is secured by us, and is the activity and of our

* Katha, 2, 20. † Svet, 3, 20. ‡ XVIII, 56. § Gita, 18, 65 || Foundations of Belief, 77.

* Svet, 6, 3, &c. † Ibid.

He becomes the accepted of God, and life and death pursue him no more. By actions, by righteousness, by the restraints of the *Yoga*, the devotee only prepares himself for the reception of the knowledge of the True, which knowledge is or at least leads to realising the oneness of the individual with the eternal in an absorbing consciousness of His universal presence. And one risen to this height of joyous and love-inspired self-abnegation and rapturous communion with God, it is hardly necessary to add, "abides in Him." Such is God's true devotee who is dear to Him. For does not the *Gītā* say: "They verily who partake of that Amrita-Dharma, endued with faith, I their supreme object, devotees, they are surpassingly dear to me." That to love God is to know God is a maxim which is common to all the higher forms of religion; and the Indian religion of *Bhakti* is based on the incontrovertible truth that love throws more light on the heavenward path of the human pilgrim than any amount of reasoning and hard mental toil. No man can ever be in the position to say the last word on the relation between *Bhakti* and *Jñāna*—between divine love and divine light. Some attain love through light, others attain light through love; and both lead to the same goal, namely, God.

भक्त्याममभिजानाति यावान् यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।

ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥

"By devotion he knows me fully, what I am and what My Essence is; having thus known My Essence, he forthwith enters into Me."

—*Bhagavatgītā*, XVIII, 55.

THE PROSPECT FOR VEDĀNTA IN THE WEST.

By E. T. STURDY.

What do we mean by Vedānta? Its ordinary interpretation is known, we will hope, to every reader of the *Brahmavādin*.

We have however to find a definition which will interest the world, if the teaching, namely, Vedānta doubt to be of universal benefit. Therefore it is proposed to define it as follows:—

Bhakti and *Jñāna* are the two main branches of Vedānta. *Bhakti* is that system of Philosophy and devotion combined, which, including the primitive work out to the most abstract of conceptions and only as prepares the whole field of human thought. It is the highest truth partially in all religions and for the closing sentimentally, but unrecognised, in all.

truths have been the persistent intuition of the highest essence of the Hindu sages the highest essence as for God, the Vedas of the Hindus they will shine for magnificent work of Bādarāyana this that devotion of Sankarāchārya, and ātīrtha.

This process has not been efficiently done with any other religion; the Christian efforts being disjointed and the whole work having now been surrendered to philosophers who do not start from the Western Vedas (Word, scriptures,) at all. Reference is here made to the German School, which advancing very rapidly and looking with a friendly regard to Indian philosophy, has attained expression through Schopenhauer and Deussen, not far removed from the "last word" of Sankarāchārya.

But the Western effort does not cover the whole ground; soaring to the skies it ignores the weak, who cannot rise to the perception of its conclusions and therefore gathers to itself only those clear and keen minds which persistently give themselves to thought. Truly has Sankarāchārya said—"Wisdom is not gained without clear thinking as objects are never perceived without light." Very few men sit down and think consecutively of things beyond the mundane. In the West again philosophy rarely seems to work itself through into practice. This is where India is practical.

We have seen then that the Western expression is only partial as a system; that is to say, many types of men cannot find their various paths in it: they have to rummage first through Christian sects, then through mystical interpretations of Christian Dogma (Boehme, Madame de la Mothe Guyon, Anna Kingsford, &c.), and finally through German Philosophy before they have covered the field, thought.

In India the field is covered by the *Sūtrakāra* and worked out into three great interpretations which, strange to say, are not mutually destructive if judged by a liberal interpretation. These, of course, are the *Dvaita*, *Viśiṣṭādvaita* and *Advaita*; and in this order each adds something to the other, or counting from the last, each limits somewhat the other and in this way the whole field is covered. Nor is it impossible for one teacher to advocate and encourage all three. Everything depends on the standpoint and power of perception of the disciple: the only stumbling block is when men think, having reached only to *dwaitism*, that for all time there is nothing more to be said or learned. It is a kind of provision of the mind and gives the individual strength for the time being, this conviction that now he is right for evermore!

So, for the West, we need men who can demonstrate this threefold wisdom, not those who can only speak the final word, like the German Philosopher and the *Advaitin*, nor like our sectarians, who can only expound the first lesson, or at most the second. And such men must live as they teach, that is the method of the practical East. They must, in short, be Yogis. Now it is said!

Without *Yoga* no man, especially an Eastern man, can stand firm in the torrent of Western *rajas*: he needs strength. In one of its various forms at least, he must have *Yoga*. The West has lost what little practical *Yoga* it ever had in the decay of monastic life, when religion is no longer practical, when it is only a theory accepted by this man,

denied by that, and opposed by the rush of a sensuous civilization, how long can it last? It is already in ruins. But the heart is not in ruins; it runs out now upon all kinds of physical endeavour for men's help in material comfort, material well-being; but they cannot give *Life Eternal*; they cannot give the only balm that heals the hopeless sorrows of *Samsāra*, for they haven't it. A thousand *Yugas* of direct progress, as we are going, would end where we now are—in a material world, where birth, growth, decay, old age, separation, sorrow and death are the *conditions*. They know not, dream not, of any means to alter these.

So we need such men, *who can cover the whole ground*; one-sided men will not do; they must be beyond names—Iswara, Jahova, Allah, Force, Spirit, or Jiva, Soul, Intelligence, Mind, whatever it be, it must serve as the counter by which what is hidden beyond the names must be expressed.

Now such men are hard to find, and when found are not willing to leave their native land. Race difficulties last long; the surest way to conquer the conqueror is by Love. The influence of India upon Europe, upon, let us say, more directly England, has not been small during these later years and it is increasing. Come over then and conquer us with the *thought* of your ancient mighty sages which still reverberates through the present, as it is destined in some form to do in the future also. It lies with the *Hindus* to strike *here* at the great reading and student classes and through that to raise their country in the respect of the great mass of its now ignorant rulers, for the British public is sadly ignorant of Indian Wisdom. From that will arise wider sympathies, greater trust and a state of things now blocked by hopeless race prejudices, which only harden and become more obdurate through mutual criticisms, discontent, and pride, and which melt away as snow in the sunshine, if met with wider knowledge and clearer perception that race, language, creed and the rest are nothing as differences, compared with the great hopes, fears, defeats and victories that should unite the human family on this globe into one.

दासस्तेहंदेहवुद्धया विशिष्टः ।

अंशत्वं ते जीवदृष्ट्या प्रभोमे ।

नष्टे मोहे आत्मसंस्थो यदाहम् ।

पश्याम्येकं त्वं त्वहं वा प्रसिद्धम् ॥

ब्रह्मार्पणं अस्तु.

Correspondence.

THE HINDU PREACHER.

Many are of opinion that the Hindu religion neither *was* nor can ever be a propagandistic religion and that every attempt to spread it is antagonistic to its fundamental principles. To these men of

such peculiar views we say that religion without preaching is like life without animation. Without the institution of preaching no religion can withstand the immoral influences of degeneration or retard the progress of corruption. From immemorial antiquity down to this nineteenth century of the Christian era the vital powers of the Hindu Faith have been preserved by the *Aratārs* or incarnations of God and by holy sages, whose mission in life was to promulgate from time to time the highest doctrines of purity, spiritual development, and the attainment of divine perfection, and also to popularise the solutions of intricate religious and philosophical problems found in our sacred Scriptures. Strictly speaking these inspired sages and their chosen disciples were the real preachers of the *Sanātana Dharma*, the eternal faith. To this kind of propagation and popularisation of its immortal doctrines, the Hindu religion owes its existence; and it will live through eternity if only its true spirit gets widely diffused. In short it will, as the best embodiment of truth, become the predominant religion of the world, if Hindu preachers offer the light of their religion to the seekers after truth among the nations of the world.

The method of preaching adopted by the Hindus of olden days was altogether different from what is now adopted by the followers of other faiths. The ancient Hindu preachers always tried to satisfy the religious cravings of the people by teaching them such truths as could be comprehended by them in those times. As time rolled on the capacity of men for religious and moral culture became improved and new changes and reformatations were introduced into the method of preaching, so as to ~~supply~~ ^{meet} the new ~~requirements~~ ^{requirements} of the ~~res-~~ ^{re-} ~~simil-~~ ^{simil-} at large.

In very ancient times religion was preached and propagated in India by *Rishis* holy sages, who by the example of pure and highly moral lives, taught the people how to make spiritual progress and divine perfection. After the days of the *Rishi* caste of the Brahmins became as a whole responsible for the preservation and propagation of the *gained* Aryan Faith. The advent of the *Jñān-mārga*—the path of knowledge—as an improvement upon the old *Karma-mārga*—the path of rituals—brought the ascetic *Sannyāsins* forward as an order devoted entirely to the work of propagation of the divine truth of religion. The ancient *Sannyāsins* of India are the oldest preachers of religion known to human history, and even to-day we have their successors in our midst. When all other religions in the world were narrow and exclusive, India had more than one body of ascetic preachers of the sublime and universal religion of the *Vedānta*. Both Buddhist and Jain literature of pre-Christian origin bear witness to this fact.

During the Buddhist period, Buddhist monks preached clarity, morality, purity and peace throughout the length and breadth of India and Central and even Western Asia; and the result was

that thousands upon thousands accepted the teachings of Buddha and became converts to this new branch of the old Hindu Faith. But after something like a thousand year's sway in India, Buddhism was driven out of the land of its birth by means, mainly, of the work of Hindu *śaṅkara* like Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and his followers.

Kumārila proclaimed the truth of the sublime doctrines of the Vedas from the Himālayas to Cape Comorin and after fighting hard with the Buddhists he at last succeeded in reviving the authority of *Brahminism*, and in reconverting the Buddhists into the old Hindu Faith. Then after Buddhism was driven out of India by the efforts of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and others, there arose in the South the mighty genius, Sankara, who gave a new stimulus to the spiritual revival of the Hindus. He explained the spirit of the Vedas in the new light of the Vedānta, gave a firm foundation to the Hindu Faith and propounded the doctrine of *Advaitism* as that which is taught by the *Upanishads*. The fallacies of the Buddhist philosophy were clearly exposed by Sankara in his Vedantic commentaries and other works. Sankara preached the Vedānta and conquered the then leaders of the various sects that had arisen with the downfall of Buddhism by means of his powerful polemical weapons and extraordinary spiritual powers.

Sankara seems naturally to have thought that it was necessary to have preachers of Hinduism, and that these preachers should be monks or *Sannyāsins*, who, by leading pure, moral, and spiritual lives, would be in a position to teach to the masses the true spirit of the Vedānta, themselves constantly moving from place to place for the purpose. The disciples of Sankara followed their master, preached Vedānta, and established *Mathas* or monasteries in different parts of the land. These monasteries became in time the head quarters of *Sannyāsins*. Even from before the time of Sankara the *śaṅkara* have been the real pillars of the Hinduism in all its sectarian aspects.

After Sankarāchārya—Rāmānuja, Madhva, Chaitanya and Nānaka, (all inspired preachers and founders of different religious sects in India) arose in various parts of the land, and preached the different aspects of the all-sided Hindu Religion. They propagated the *Bhakti-mārga* or the path of love and devotion, and profoundly impressed upon the minds of men, the higher doctrines of divine faith, love and devotion. All of them, sympathising even with the lowest classes of the Hindu community, roused their religious feelings which lay dormant for centuries, and converted them to become *Bhaktis* of the one Supreme God of the Vedānta in one way or another. Chaitanya and Nānaka went a little further than others. They allowed even *Yatnas* and Mahomedans to enter into their religious community and become their disciples.

Thus we see that before the birth of Buddhism, Christianity and Mahomedanism, Hinduism was a propagandistic religion, the diffusive influence of its universal principles working amongst the

Hindus of the different parts of India. After Buddhism arose Hinduism stretched forth its mighty arms among the Buddhists and collected them once again into the Hindu fold. When Mahomedanism came to India, no doubt some of the Hindus embraced the faith of Islam: but why?—Because the Mahomedans preached the faith of Islam by taking sword in one hand and the Koran in the other. And when the time came the Hindu Vedānta influenced even Mahomedanism, and its old converts accepted again the teachings of Hindu preachers. Islam softened and beautified by the Vedānta is the religion of the *Sufis*.

After such conversions and reconversions, Hinduism has been silently working among its followers and gathering for them strength and light. A new religious wave has now come from foreign lands, which is, in all probability, simply a reflected wave re-coiling upon the original shore whose "prophet winds" gave rise to it at the first instance. This new wave is called Christianity and its historic relation to the Vedāntism of India is sure to be made out sooner or later. Faint voices are already heard pointing to the Indian origin of Christianity, and the true Hindu can have nothing but sympathy for all sorts and conditions of converts. All religion is in the conversion of the obdurate heart of man and in inclining him to virtue and to devotion to God. But do all converters know this?

Mercenary preachers of any religion can nowhere do any real good, for their mission in life is to anyhow increase the numbers of converts. With such preachers religion becomes a commercial article. They are ever in search of new markets for its sale, and often much of what is not good for home consumption is sold abroad, and very naturally the figures in the account books swell. Is this religious progress? We are living in a curiously mercantile age, which has, in a remarkably wonderful way, made not only religion and philosophy but also philanthropy itself a paying profession. Indulging in habits of luxury and endeavouring to satisfy their worldly desire for pleasure and for fame, these mercenary diffusers of religion do not care so much for the spiritual development of man as for making numerous converts from other religions. They will not allow religions and religious men to live at peace with one another. If they did so their own occupation would be gone.

Hinduism has in recent years suffered much owing to the want of proper preachers. Though the *Sannyāsins* were formerly the real preachers of religion in India, most of them have now become illiterate and luxury-loving in their habits, and do not feel the practice of renunciation and the teaching and preaching of religion to be their daily duty. Hence it is now necessary that well-educated *Sannyāsins*, animated by the sincerest piety and the most austere spirit of humility and self-denial, should rise from the Hindu community to make themselves all in all to the people, to set before them examples of perfect righteousness and to

devote their lives with zeal to popular instruction and the office of preaching religion. Men of real sanctity and high minded freedom, and gifted with high intellectual powers should now enter upon this path of religious zeal, and remove the abuses and the moral corruption that are daily working mischief in our society and in our homes. Spiritual strength comes to all, as usual, by the door of renunciation, and resignation can alone be the undisturbed home of the serene life of religious bliss. Heroic Hindus! take up the begging bowl and go from door to door spreading the love of righteousness and peace among mankind.

Moreover, it is now high time for us to send Hindu missionaries like Swami Vivékânanda to distant lands for diffusing widely the highest doctrines of the Hindu religion, and for bringing men of all creeds under its benign influence.

In Europe and America there must be earnest and sincere souls waiting to hear the sublime teachings of the Vedânta and to accept the doctrines of Karma, of re-incarnation and of the immortality of the soul.

A great want of this age is a religious order of the Hindus, which, well-equipped with modern learning in science and in philosophy, possessing a knowledge of the world, and acquainted with the spirit of the times, will undertake the propagation of the Hindu religion in all countries, and bring into existence the reign of peace and harmony in the midst of warring sects and religions. The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man are both surely independent of the religious garb we men wear from time to time.

N. W. P.

A SWAMI.

A GENUINE LOVER IS A GENUINE SEER.

In nature we find that things of the same character can alone get assimilated with one another, as for instance, water with water. If a different substance, say milk or any other thing, be mixed with water, there is no assimilation; but there is a mixture in which both water and milk exist, each retaining its nature. Real assimilation takes place only when things of the same character come in close contact with each other. Earth gets assimilated to earth, gold to gold, water to water, and so on. Two different things can never be assimilated with each other so as to form one indivisible whole. So whenever assimilation of this kind takes place between two or more things, it is certain that those things are of one and the same nature. This same law holds true in the inner spiritual world of man also.

Heerâ has lost her child and is weeping and rending her hair, as if there can be no consolation for her. But Pannû why does *she* weep with her beloved friend Heerâ? She has no child of her own to lose and mourn for the loss. Still she is

not the less disconsolate of the two. She loved the child of her friend even as Heerâ herself loved it. Now Heerâ's loss has become her loss too; or in other words, Pannû has become one with Heerâ; and this assimilation between them can not take place unless Pannû and Heerâ are one in their nature and essence.

My dear reader, you read a certain writing. When the writer is somewhat pathetic in his strain, you catch his pathos. You weep and laugh with him. Can you do it unless you and he are of the same mental and moral nature? Says the great Teacher "Weep with those who weep, and laugh with those who laugh." Can any teacher enjoin this precept on his disciples unless he knows that the same spirit is abiding in every human being? Every one of us knows the story that when Yasodâ tied the person of her child Sî Krishna with a rope, Balarâma, who was then asleep, waking, inquired of his mother Rohinî whether she had bound him with a rope or not. Why was this? Balarâma had assimilated so much of the nature of Sî Krishna that, in this case, the assimilation led even to their corporeal frames being affected alike. This shows the thorough unification of the selves of the two brothers by the binding power of love.

The very fact that we can sympathise with our fellow-men, adore, honor, admire, and love one another, shows that the inner self in every one of us is of one and the same nature. The more we love one another, the more do we assimilate one another's nature, till, when our love becomes universal, the result is a kind of universal assimilation; and the inner spirit of man then emerges from the infinite ocean of diversity to breathe the pure and invigorating air of unity, which is the transcendental feeling of oneness with the universe. Then we can look upon as the *Wanderer* of Wordsworth does,

Ocean and earth, the solid f
And ocean's liquid mass
In gladness and d

And in their silent
Unutterable love,
Nor any voice e
The spectacle;
All melted into
His animal be
And by them
In such need
Of visitation
Thought w
No thing s
Rapt into t
The rope
His name
That in

Love is ind
It ties the
fill in the
human natur
in unspeakab
love at last t

God. This *Saiva-Siddhānta* is therefore a form of the *Vīśhādvaita-Vedānta*.

"God is one with the world, is different from it and is neither. He is one and not one with the soul. He is omnipresent without being one with, or different from, the world." God's relation to the world is not that of the creator and the created; neither the world, nor man is created by God. "You find Good and Evil together; you must take things as they are. Man is impure and weak; it is just possible there is a pure Being who is pure and strong enough to lift him from the bottomless pit." The eternal human soul is liberated from its eternal bonds by "God's grace which will touch and convert us to Himself." But this conversion of man into God is not the identification of the one with the other; "the freed Soul does not become co-extensive with God. It simply becomes imbedded in it, a mere drop in the vast ocean, a mere trace as it were." God is not "the Absolute and the infinite," for then "He could not be Omnipresent." And his Omnipresence it is that the word *Advaita*, as applied to this school, seems to denote. *Advaita* is not the assertion of oneness, but the negation of two, and so perhaps means *many*. "God fills the universe by His *Gnāna sakti*. God is *Gnānam*. He is *Gnāna mayam*, and *Gnānam* is not space, nor matter, nor *malam*. And it is therefore possible to fill one unit of space with one unit of matter and one of *Gnānam* or God."

Though the soul and matter are eternal, yet they require the intervention of God, through His *Sakti*, to put them in relation; and He adjusts them adapting His adjustments to the law of *Karma*. This law is very nearly the same to this school as it is to all the Vedantic schools and need not, therefore, be described here.

We believe we have stated the main theses of this philosophy in sufficient detail to enable our readers to grasp its characteristic features. The language and the main conceptions are all taken from the *Vedānta*; but the conception of three eternal entities and the rather subordinate part assigned to the creator in the evolution of the universe are the peculiarities of this sect. The application of the language of the *Vedānta* to new and even opposite conceptions and thoughts cannot but lead to confusion and fallacy; and we, adduced above an example of such a confusion of thought in respect of the words *Sat* and *Asat*. It is, however, easy to see that here as in *Vaishnavism*, we have the religion of *Bhakti* woven into the philosophy of the *Vedānta*.

The work before us deserves careful study as a contribution to the solution of religious and metaphysical problems by the people of South India who, in striving to strike out their own paths under impulses derived from the *Vedānta*, have shown a spirit of devotional fervour almost unknown to any other nation or philosophy.

Notes.

Under the auspices of Dewan A. Seshayya Sastrial Avergal, and Rao Bahadur S. Seshayya Avergal, an *Advaita Sabha* will be held on the 29th instant at Kumbakonam, at which those learned in the Philosophy of Sri Sankarāchārya will be examined, and rewarded on the results of the examination. Mahā Mahopādhyayin Brah-

ma Sri Raja Sastrial of Mannārkoil will be present. This is to encourage the study of the Philosophy of Sri Sankarāchārya.

In a state of intense devotion to God, the *Bhaktas* sometimes shed tears, sometimes laugh, feel delighted, prattle, dance, sing, and proclaim His Glory; and get silent on reaching the last stage of blissful ecstasy.

—*Narada Pāñcharatra*.

Who knows if love and its beatitude, clear manifestation as it is of the universal harmony of things, is not the best demonstration of a fatherly and understanding God, just as it is the shortest road by which to reach Him? Love is a faith, and one faith leads to another. And this faith is happiness, light, and force. Only by it does a man enter into the series of the living, the awakened, the happy, the redeemed,—of those true men who know the value of existence and who labour for the glory of God and of the Truth. Perhaps it is through love that I shall find my way back to faith, to religion, to energy, to concentration. . . . Believe, then, in a fatherly Providence and dare to love.

—*Amiel's Journal*.

"Devotion is not simply rational,—it is deeply touched with emotion: it is the attachment of the heart, as well as the ascent of the understanding,—it is union with God through the medium of feeling."

"It is the pouring forth of the grateful and adoring heart to the Great Being in whom alone it finds rest and satisfaction; and the pious man represents the Object of his worship as being his all in all, as dwelling in him and working in him and transforming him."

—W. L. Davidson.

The more object there is, so much greater is the love to it; and to an Absolute Object there corresponds absolute love.

All our natural tendencies and desires appear to be nothing but applied religion. The heart seems to be, as it were, the religious organ. Religion arises when the heart, withdrawn from all single real objects, feels and makes itself an ideal object. All individual desires unite into one desire, whose wondrous object is a higher Being, a Deity; and hence genuine piety embraces all the feelings and tendencies. This natural God eats us, produces us, speaks with us, trains us, lets Himself be eaten by us, be begotten, and be produced by us, and is the infinite matter of our activity and of our suffering.

—*Novalis*.

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